



## A new EU Strategy for Global Health: a vision for better health for future generations in Europe and beyond, with science at its heart.

Through its Global Health Strategy, the EU has an opportunity to show leadership across urgent issues in – and to trigger a paradigm shift in approaches to – global health. In this paper, Wellcome sets out what we feel should be the key principles which underpin the Strategy, and which issues the EU should address. We have developed this paper following external consultation.

This paper supports our EU Global Health Strategy consultation response.

### Key principles

#### 1. Science and evidence must be at the core of the new strategy.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, science has shown its enormous potential for finding solutions that benefit us all by developing effective tests, vaccines and treatments in record time. Science also holds the keys to solving many other global health challenges, both current and future. Only by putting research at the centre of its Strategy will the EU be able to realise its full potential on global health.

- The EU oversees the world's largest multilateral research funding programme – Horizon Europe. This creates a significant opportunity for embedding research within the Strategy.
- It is crucial that the Strategy's priorities are reflected in current and future EU research funding programmes, to ensure that the EU's ambition on global health is being supported by evidence. Ensuring that research evidence is being fed back through to policy initiatives will also be important.
- As well as ensuring a strong global health focus to the next research funding programme, the Strategy should support capacity building for research in the Global South.

#### 2. Ensuring ongoing momentum for (global) health within the EU and globally.

The last two years have seen health at the top of the political agenda in the EU and globally. For the EU, the Covid-19 pandemic has seen the EU go further on health both for its own citizens and for populations outside of Europe - this shift is welcome. For the Strategy to be successful it must find a way of maintaining this momentum in the long term; the next legislature in the European Parliament and Commission have a duty to honour the strategy's ambition. This legislature has benefited hugely from a strong advocate for global health and science as its Commission President – it is vital that Ursula Von der Leyen's successor shares her conviction.

#### 3. The divide between 'EU' and 'global' health must be broken down.

The pandemic underlined for all of us that our health is bound up inextricably with the health of those living in other parts of the world. The big health challenges we face – climate change, infectious disease, and mental health – affect populations in the EU as well as in other regions of the world. The Strategy should acknowledge this, drawing on the EU's power to take action



internally – within the bloc – and externally, through global initiatives and action to equip, upskill and empower countries in the Global South. Only when the EU is acting effectively at both levels can it realise its potential on global health.

- **Addressing inequalities – not geographies – should be at the heart of the Strategy.**  
Global health challenges do not affect all people and populations equally. In the EU as in other areas of the world, if you are better off and better resourced you will be able to better manage health threats than someone who is less well off. The Strategy must recognise this and set out to go further for those who need it most, wherever they are in the world.
- **Mainstreaming global health into EU policymaking is crucial.**  
Action driven by the EU, even if not directly related to health, can have a positive (or indeed negative) impact on peoples' health wherever they are in the world. The Fit for 55 climate package, for example, could have a key role in reducing emissions within the bloc and this will benefit people's health in the EU and beyond. Understanding the breath of health gains will help support implementation by the EU's Member States and should be considered as part of the Strategy. The EU already has a laudable and effective approach to mainstreaming health in policymaking, *Health in All Policies*, and this should be built on, to encompass an analysis of the impact of future initiatives emerging from the EU on populations both within and outside the EU. A joined-up approach within the European Commission, where there is ongoing dialogue across all Directorates General will help ensure that health gains and risks to health are understood early - the Strategy should be a lever for this dialogue.

4. **The Strategy must be actively address power imbalances with the Global South.**  
To be genuinely ambitious and salient, the Strategy must engage a diverse group of actors (individuals and organisations) – including from the Global South – from a range of backgrounds and disciplines in its development and delivery. By prioritising meaningful engagement, the EU can be a real leader in showing how the Global North can approach global health in a way that helps reframe historic power imbalances between North and South.
5. **Clear goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) will help ensure the Strategy's success.**  
It is crucial that the Strategy articulates a sense of what good looks like, with associated targets and KPIs. Realistic and measurable targets that will make it possible for the EU to assess the progress and impact of its Strategy.
6. **The EU must emphasise prevention (but still be ready to respond).**  
The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need to act early and decisively to stop health threats spiralling out of control. By emphasising preventative rather than curative approaches the EU's global health efforts can save lives and be more cost effective than response alone.
  - Waiting for an infection to become a pandemic is too late. By ensuring a better understanding of why infections occur and escalate, the EU can be firmly on the front foot in tackling future pandemics.
  - Mitigating climate change is the only way to protect the planet from the catastrophic effects on health of climate change.



**7. The Strategy must focus on where it can add most value.**

The scope of current and future global health challenges is wide-ranging; the EU cannot address them all, in an impactful way. The EU should therefore assess where it can add most value. In our consultation response, we proposed the below criteria for deciding on priorities:

- The Strategy should identify a small number of ambitious, high-impact priorities where there is a current gap in political, scientific and/or policy/regulatory leadership on a global scale.
- Priorities should be embedded in political reality: developing a narrative that resonates, for people living in the EU and beyond, around the Strategy's priorities will be crucial.
- Equity – and the imperative to address health inequalities in Europe and beyond – should underpin the strategy.
- Priorities should be timely and time sensitive. The Strategy should set priorities that need urgent action.
- The Strategy will need to balance laser focus with the need to be flexible. As we learnt with Covid-19, being able to respond to situations as they emerge in the global health space is key. The strategy should build in room to manoeuvre from the start.
- Priorities – and the means of implementing them – should complement and reinforce rather than duplicate wherever possible. The Health Emergency Response Authority (HERA) initiative will be crucial for building the EU's own internal resilience to pandemics and this will contribute to global preparedness globally. It will nevertheless be important that this initiative continues to be linked up to similar initiatives in the EU (such as the Berlin Hub) and globally (other Bardas, for example).

**8. Forming genuine partnerships and collaboration should be a crucial part of the Strategy.**

To be effective and efficient, the EU will need to collaborate. Working closely with global philanthropies such as Wellcome could help support the delivery of the Strategy, effectively providing extra resource, increasing its chance of impact and success. In terms of partnerships with countries, the Team Europe approach has developed into an effective mechanism to foster momentum and funding behind global health, and this should be further developed. The EU should also work to ensure its Member States – and of course the European Parliament – are consulted on and bought into the Strategy as it is developed to ensure both their support and alignment with national-level global health strategies ie. the French global health strategy, which is being developed in parallel. The EU should also think strategically about which partners it wishes to partner bilaterally with in the G7 and G20, to enable it to take more of a leadership role in these fora.

**9. An opportunity to lead on health in global fora.**

The Strategy should articulate how the EU will take its priorities forward, including by taking a leadership role on health in global fora. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the EU demonstrated its potential for leadership, both geopolitically and on global health. This leadership should be continued and expanded upon: the EU should leverage its role in the G7 and G20 to ensure that global health remains on the agenda in a post-pandemic future. It should also bring a health angle to global fora where health is not yet a priority but where there is a close connection to health, such as Conference of the Parties. Through its convening power, the EU is also uniquely positioned to bring together powerful coalitions, including its Member States, to advance global



health. Where appropriate, the EU should also seek to attain full membership of organisations or groupings, rather than continuing to hold observer status or similar positions.

**10. The EU must realise the full potential of its position as a regional organisation.**

Being a uniquely deeply integrated regional organisation means the EU is well-placed to work closely with other regional organisations. The EU's support in the development of the African CDC and African Medicines AMA should be built on, for example. A regional 'twinning' approach could help bring relationships onto a more equal footing and give more agency to the regions most affected by issues the EU is striving to solve. Focussing on regions rather than individual countries would also help align the EU with WHO's regional model of organisation.

**11. Ensure adequate financing in the long-term.**

The goals and commitments in the Strategy must be fully and sustainably funded for them to be successful. As the Strategy is set to be published in the middle of a Multiannual Financial Framework, it will initially need to draw on existing funding within other programmes. At the next MFF, the Strategy should have dedicated budget and its priorities mainstreamed into the development of the next research funding programme, health programme and other programmes as relevant.

- The Strategy should articulate how the EU, in times of future health crises such as pandemics, will be able to leverage funding – and disburse it – in a timely way.

### Priority areas for activity

We believe there are three areas in which activity and investment are needed most urgently and where the EU can add value. These are **Infectious Disease, Climate and Health, and Mental Health.**

#### **Infectious disease:**

Over the last two years, the EU's global health focus has been centred on pandemic response and preparedness. Going forward, the EU should move towards a focus on prevention, adopting a more holistic view of infectious disease, and focusing on building out its capacity to prepare and respond to infectious disease threats (which includes issues like Antimicrobial Resistance).

- Addressing escalating infection will require the EU to address its own internal resilience. HERA is an important initiative to build resilience internally. It's important now that HERA becomes operational as this will be an important mechanism for addressing infectious disease and emergencies. The global reach of HERA should be better articulated, in particular how it connects to other initiatives in Europe and globally.
- Wellcome warmly recognises the support the EU has provided to the Financial Intermediary Fund, which will be a crucial global tool for safeguarding against future pandemics.

#### **Climate and health:**

On a global level, the world needs leadership on climate action which foregrounds how far peoples' health is put at risk by climate change, in particular in the Global South. The Strategy should outline how the EU will become a scientific, political and legislative champion for climate action in the long term, though both its action internally within the EU and externally.



- Internally, the EU has already set a clear ambition within the bloc via the Green Deal, EU Climate Law and Fit for 55 package. These measures, once implemented effectively by Member States, will have a key role in cutting the EU's overall global gas emissions and help it meet its international commitments - this will have significant benefits to people living in the EU and beyond. These initiatives are invaluable on their own merit, but also demonstrate to the global community that the EU is ready to step up and address climate change.
- At a scientific level, the strategy should foreground research into climate change – in particular its health impacts, the potential benefits to health of rapid climate change mitigation, and the adaptations that are required to protect health under likely climate change scenarios. Work that supports building research capacity in Lower Middle-Income Countries, as well as foregrounding climate research with a global outlook in the next EU funding programme will be key.
- One Health works at the intersection of people, animals and the environment and has a strong focus zoonotic disease – it therefore is crucial for tackling both infectious disease as well as environmental challenges. Engaging a range of stakeholders beyond veterinary science, including those with expertise in climate and health, as One Health is taken forward and developed, will be crucial. While developing One Health is important, the broader impacts of climate change on peoples' health (for example, the impact of extreme heat on our wellbeing) must also be addressed and acted upon. The Strategy should distinguish between both One Health and climate and health as a broader agenda and ensure both are acted on.

#### **Mental Health:**

Mental health is an increasingly urgent and escalating challenge. The strategy should set an ambition that the next research funding programme will highlight mental health research as a priority, supporting the creation of a genuine field for mental health research. An ambitious mental health research agenda, including pan European trials across EU member states will further our understanding of mental health and this understanding will benefit populations everywhere.

Contact: [c.guinard@wellcome.org](mailto:c.guinard@wellcome.org)